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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Note: The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

CHRISTMAS AT A NAVY BASE HOSPITAL

Dear Editor: Reading in the December JOURNAL, "She's in the Navy Now," I am reminded of my first Christmas spent at a Navy Base Hospital. With the holidays drawing near, the thought of "Home, Sweet Home," seems to prevail in the camp; in fact so strong is the feeling that one can see the exact length of leave printed in the expressions of the faces of the boys as you work with them on the wards from day to day; also it is quite noticeable if leave, for any particular reason, has not been granted. We had had a very strenuous two months in the influenza wards and when the opportunity to relax presented itself, everybody fell to and a real christmassy Christmas was planned for the boys who were left behind. Our new recreation hall was so near completion that a favorable word from the Commanding Officer was all that was necessary to put it at our disposal. Securing an auto truck, two good wood choppers, an axe or two, and sharp knives, we started for the woods for holly and greens. Have you ever tried to find a particular spot in the southern part of Jersey? The roads are good for traveling, which is one redeeming feature, for I'm sure we covered miles hunting the place where holly grows, as described to us, and we felt somewhat like the old colored Mammy who, when asked why she would not ride on the merry-go-round said, "Why, child, you pays your money and you rides and rides and rides, and when you gets off where has you been?" So we, too, found ourselves very nearly back at the camp, after a good hour's run. It was great sport, trimming the wards and recreation hall, and boys who had looked forward to no Christmas tree, and no holly began to sit up and take notice once more. I shall never forget the variety of opinions expressed and the suggestions offered and while it was not wise to act on them all, here and there an idea was used to great advantage. Christmas Eve was the best ever for some of the boys; we popped corn and strung it for the tree, spun tops until about dizzy ourselves, and tooted toy horns, a signal for everybody to gather in the recreation hall. They came, the lame and the halt. For the first time in my short life in the Navy, rules and regulations were put on the shelf and "Carry on" was the pass word for the remainder of the evening. After movies,—Navy punch, cookies, and candy were served, then a present for everybody from the tree. Some one started to play "Over There," "It's a Long Way to Berlin," etc., and lost in song and smokes, the miles separating the boys from home and home folks were forgotten for the time being.

E. B. S.

CHRISTMAS AT CAMP GRANT

Dear Editor: How would it seem to spend a Christmas in an Army camp? That was the question which confronted many of the girls of the Army School of Nursing the week before Christmas while they were anxiously looking forward to the issuing of the Christmas passes. However, the announcement that all the wards of the hospital were to be decorated for the holiday, and that the work was to be done by the nurses in the various wards, aroused a new vein of interest and a great amount of friendly competition arose among the various wards as to which would be the most attractively attired for the holiday season. The decorating



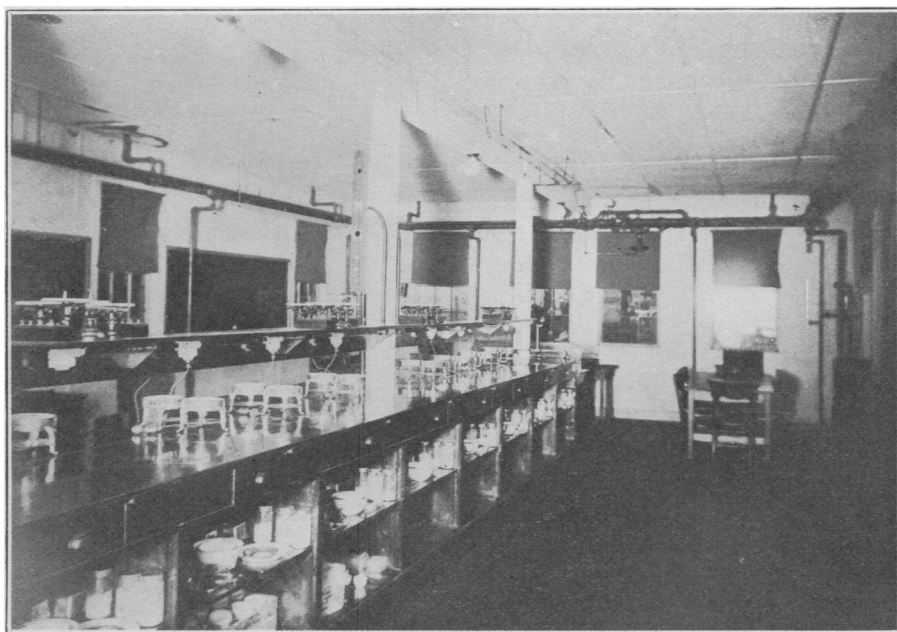
Company C at drill, Army School of Nursing, Camp Grant, Ill.



At Physical Drill, Camp Grant, Ill.



Detachment from Co. B, First Battalion, Army School of Nursing, Camp Grant, Ill. Showing various insignia and types of uniform.



Diet Kitchen, Army School of Nursing, Camp Grant.

was done under the supervision of Sergeant Blakesley and every ward was converted into a bower of loveliness through the use of Christmas greens, holly, mistletoe, paper decorations and bells. The boys who had so bravely done their share "over there" began to arrive in our camp, and this necessitated the opening of wards which had been closed since the days of influenza. The "Blue Girls" willingly worked together to decorate these wards, so that these boys would feel the Christmas spirit, even though away from home. Some of those who received their passes left for their homes on Monday, December 23, but some fifty girls remained in camp over Christmas Day in order that they might attend the dance and party at the Red Cross House on Christmas night. The girls who stayed helped with the work in the wards and during their free hours aided in the decoration, also in the sorting of Christmas fruit and dainties for the wards and the distribution of Christmas boxes so kindly donated by the Rockford Red Cross Chapter and the Salvation Army. Every ward, of course, had its Christmas tree, tastefully decorated with tinsel, popcorn, and ornaments, and lighted with tiny electric lights of various colors. Early on Christmas morning, graduate and student nurses visited the various wards, singing Christmas carols. After the regular morning work was done, the boys were given their boxes of goodies from home and also those which had been sent in from other sources. Each ward had been given five dollars to buy something for the patients, and in some of the wards grab bags were to be seen and the different articles drawn by various patients caused much laughter and jollification. The whole medical department ate Christmas dinner "en famille" at the general mess hall. One corner of the hall was reserved for officers and nurses,—graduate, student, and probationers. The members of the orchestra nobly controlled their appetities and gave us music while we ate; if they didn't thoroughly enjoy that hour they were alone in their distress. The greater part of the hall was occupied by corpsmen and patients, many of them the newly arrived overseas cases, still in uniform, with their service and wound stripes and their jaunty caps. Through the courtesy of the Commanding Officer, the relatives of the sick boys who could come to the camp were invited to do so. Rooms were provided for them and they were entertained at the mess hall for their meals. The dinner itself was quite satisfactory; the conventional turkey, of course, and mince pies. But after all, it wasn't the eating of the dinner we enjoyed half as much as just the having it, all together and everybody happy. Not least among the day's pleasures for the student nurses was the full time on ward, with absolutely no classes or lectures to break up the day, and, because of the extended hours, more leisure in which to complete the routine ward work. Christmas evening, we all dressed up in our Sunday best uniforms with our most painfully stiff collars and crunched through the sparkley new snow to the Red Cross House. The big room showed the results of Sergeant Blakesley's attention,—a gay Christmas tree brought in from Rock River banks held the place of honor on the stage, and every pillar and beam was bright with scarlet and green. Lieutenant Colonel Michie and a number of the Medical and Line Officers were present as well as graduate and student nurses. The orchestra had evidently been recompensed for its delayed dinner, for it played enthusiastically for the long program of dances. The dancing floor was never better, and everybody made full use of it, especially for the moonlight waltzes with their confetti snowstorms. Light refreshments were served, while costume and aesthetic dancing gave variety to the entertainment. The big event of the evening, however (if a dog may properly be called an event), was Nancy, the young Airedale, presented to Miss Williamson by the student nurses. There is still some question as to which gets the most enjoyment from it,—Miss Williamson,

the students, or Nancy. It was far after "lights out" when the gaiety at the Red Cross House was silent and the revelers wandered back to quarters and to bed, and certainly it will be many years before the students of the Army School of Nursing at Camp Grant forget their first military Christmas.

Army School of Nursing, Camp Grant, Illinois.

TWO STUDENTS.

HEROIC WORK OF ARMY NURSES

The Superintendent of the Training School of the New York Post Graduate Hospital sends word of the recommendation for citation and honors of two graduates of that school, Bertha Cornwall, class of 1899, and Ida M. Ferguson, class of 1911. The commanding officer wrote of them: "Bertha Cornwall * * * remained on duty in the operating room on October 8, 1918, when the hospital was being shelled, which shelling lasted twelve hours. Miss Cornwall refused to leave her post of duty, although the operating room was several times showered with fragments of bursting shells. By this courageous conduct she assisted at considerable risk of her own life in saving the lives of a number of wounded soldiers and by the example she set, the hospital was enabled to function steadily under shell fire."

"Ida M. Ferguson * * * displayed great courage at Choppy, France, on October 8, 1918, when the hospital was shelled for an entire day. Miss Ferguson remained constantly at her post of duty in the operating room, which was repeatedly showered with fragments of bursting shells. By this bravery, risking her own life, she aided in saving the lives of several wounded men."

A physician with whom they were associated, wrote: "Miss Cornwall and Miss Ferguson were attached to this surgical team which was sent to the famous First American Division in April. To this day there is nothing on record to explain how nurses ever reached this advanced zone, but the fact remains that they followed the Gypsy Division in its history-making days through Amiens, Cantigny, Soissons, Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel, the Argonne, etc. For seven months they lived under unbelievable hardships and dangers. Day after day and night after night they traveled by motor truck train, following the lines almost from the sea to Alsace. Their food was 'hard tack,' 'bully beef,' and 'monkey meat,' and their bed any convenient building, hay stack, or often, open fields and woods. Sometimes, in days of stress, there was no stop for sleep, which meant drowsing away all night on the cold, wet seat of an army truck, dashing madly through the darkness with every light 'doused.' At the end of each trip they slaved for long hours at an operating table and when completely exhausted strove to snatch such sleep as the Boche shells, gas and bombs would permit. Added to the stress of this routine work, came the added menace, always present, of these high explosives and gas shells, aerial bombs and machine guns. And through it all never a murmur or complaint did I hear from them."

COPY OF A PERSONAL LETTER FROM FRANCE

Dear ———: Wonder of wonders, the box sent last Christmas with the plum puddings, malted milk and jam has turned up at last. We have sampled a plum pudding and they are wonderful. The rest we will keep for Christmas or to celebrate our victory, if we are here for Christmas. The jam had nearly all leaked out, much to our sorrow, but the malted milk was intact. You would have been amused if you could have seen me opening the box with a German sword for a chisel and a flat-iron for a hammer. I was making such a noise that I did